



# Captive Wild Animal Farm Regulations

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This publication provides a summary of Wisconsin's laws, which pertain to individuals that possess a captive wild animal farm license. It is not a complete set of the laws.

## A CAPTIVE WILD ANIMAL FARM LICENSE ALLOWS THE HOLDER TO:

Possess in pens, raise, breed, kill, exhibit, purchase, and sell those species of live captive wild animals and birds which are regulated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and that are listed by the DNR on your license. The license only allows the holder of the license to kill or allow an employee to kill captive wild animals. No one else may kill an animal on a captive wild animal farm. A licensed veterinarian may euthanize an animal for medical reasons.

### Compliance with Local Regulations:

No initial captive wild animal farm application may be approved for the possession of harmful wild animals (all bears and cougars) unless the application is accompanied by written assurance that the application is in compliance with local ordinances and zoning regulations.

## CLASSES OF CAPTIVE WILD ANIMAL FARM LICENSES (CWAFL)

There are 2 types of captive wild animal farm licenses, a Class A and a Class B.

In addition to rules and regulations that apply to both types of licenses there are rules and regulations that are specific to each license type. This section will explain the differences to help you determine which license to apply for.

### Class A Captive Wild Animal Farm

**\$200 Initial Application/\$100 Renewal**

A class A captive wild animal farm licenses are required to operate a captive wild animal farm that earns \$10,000 or more in annual sales, or to sell the following native reptiles or amphibians:

1. Leopard Frogs
2. Tiger Salamanders
3. Mudpuppies
4. Any native reptile or amphibian collected outside of Wisconsin (which can only be sold to educational or research institutions).

### Class B Captive Wild Animal Farm

**\$50 Initial Application/\$25 Renewal**

You will want to apply for a class B captive wild animal farm license if you operate a captive wild animal farm that earns less than \$10,000 in annual sales.

## LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

### Native vs. Non-native Captive Wild Animals

With the 2003 changes in the captive wildlife laws the DNR regulation of captive wildlife is now focused on animals native to Wisconsin.

"Native" means indigenous and occurring or having occurred naturally within the boundaries of this state.

"Nonnative wild animal" means a wild animal that is not native to Wisconsin.

You no longer need a captive wildlife license from the DNR to possess most non-native wild animals in pens. Common examples are pheasants (except those on a bird hunting preserve). However, some non-native animals may still require a permit from USDA or Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). You should contact these agencies for regulations and additional information before getting any wild animal.

\*DATCP (608) 224-4872

\*USDA (608) 270-4000

### Non-Native animals that DO require a CWAFL:

1. Harmful wild animals (all subspecies of bear and cougar). Additional species may be added.
2. Endangered or threatened species (also require an endangered or threatened species permit).
3. Most migratory game birds (a list may be obtained by contacting Customer Service and Licensing).

### Native animals that DO NOT require a CWAFL:

You may possess the following species without a Captive wildlife type license provided you obtain them from a legal source:

- ❖ Arthropods and mollusks that are not endangered or threatened species, chipmunks, pocket gophers, mice, moles, opossums, pigeons, porcupines, rats, shrews, English sparrows, starlings, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, red squirrels, voles, and weasels.

### NOTE:

- ❖ A commercial clam-shelling license is needed to take more than 50 lb. of clams per day from the wild.
- ❖ A fishing or small game license is needed to take crayfish from the wild. Any person under age 16 does not need a license to take crayfish.

# ANIMAL HEALTH AND HUSBANDRY STANDARDS

## Feeding

Captive wild animals must be fed at least once each day, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian or as required to provide adequate care.

- ❖ The food must be clean, nutritious, and given in a large enough amount to maintain the normal condition and weight of the animal.
- ❖ The diet must be appropriate for the individual animal's age and condition.

## Watering

If clean drinking water is not continually available to the captive wild animals, it must be offered to the animals as often as necessary to ensure their health and well being, but not less than twice daily for at least one hour each time, unless restricted by a veterinarian.

## Food and Water Containers

Containers must be easily accessible for all captive wild animals, must be located so as to reduce the chance of contamination by animal waste and pests, and be protected from rain and snow. Containers should be made of a durable material that may be easily cleaned and sanitized or be disposable.

## Environmental Enrichment

You must supply all captive wild animals with environmental enrichment. Consider species differences when you decide upon the type or methods of enrichment. Examples of environmental enrichment include providing perches, objects to climb, food to search for and running water.

### Additional Enrichment Requirements: Bears, Cougars, Bobcat and Lynx

License holders for these species must develop, document and follow a plan for environment enhancement that will promote the psychological well being of these captive wild animals.

- ❖ The plan must meet currently accepted professional standards found in appropriate professional journals or reference guides, and as directed by the attending veterinarian.
- ❖ You need to make this plan available to any authorized DNR agent upon request.

## PEN SPECIFICATIONS

In Wisconsin all primary enclosures housing captive wild animals must comply with the following regulations. In addition bear, cougar, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox, fisher, all raptors, raccoon, badger, beaver, otter and migratory waterfowl have specific minimum pen requirements. These special pen requirements along with transportation requirements can be found in the "Captive Wildlife Pen and Transportation Specifications" pamphlet. Contact DNR Customer Service and Licensing for your copy.

### General Facility Requirements:

1. Pens must be structurally sound, kept in good repair, protect the captive animals from injury, hold the animals securely and protect them from other animals.
2. Bear, cougar, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox, fisher, all raptors, raccoon, badger, beaver and otter **may not** be kept in any part of a building or home where people live unless receiving **temporary** health care, treatment or special handling.
3. Areas used for storing food or bedding must be free of trash, animal waste, weeds, insects, etc. to prevent rotting and spread of disease.
4. All surfaces in a pen, including houses, dens, shelters, fixtures and objects must be easily cleaned or removed or replaced when worn or dirty. Surfaces must be free of rust and jagged edges or sharp points.
5. If raised floors are used they must be constructed so the animals feet cannot pass through the openings in the floor. If the floor is constructed of wire a solid resting surface large enough to hold all the animals at the same time must be provided.
6. Enclosures and food and water containers must be cleaned and sanitized at least once every 2 weeks and more often if necessary to prevent a buildup of dirt, debris, animal and food waste and other disease risks.
7. Standing puddles of water must be drained or mopped up after cleaning or rain so the animals remain dry.
8. Trash containers in food storage and preparation areas must be leakproof with tightly fitting lids. The lids must remain on unless the caretaker is using them.
9. Supplies of food and bedding must be stored in a way that protects them from spoilage, contamination and pest infestation. You must be able to clean around and under the supplies. Foods requiring refrigeration must be stored in the refrigerator. All open food must be kept in a leakproof container with a tightly fitting lid.
10. To promote the health of the captive animal an effective program for the control of insects, external parasites and birds and mammals that are pests needs to be developed and followed.

### General Pen and Shelter Requirements:

- ❖ Pens must be large enough to allow each captive wild animal to make normal position changes with plenty of freedom of movement.
- ❖ All captive wild animals housed in the same enclosure should be compatible. Vicious or aggressive animals must be housed separately.
- ❖ Outdoor facilities must provide shelter large enough to fit all animals inside comfortably.
- ❖ Shelters need 4 sides, a roof and a floor and must provide the animals with protection from the cold and heat, sun, snow, wind and rain.
- ❖ A wind and rain break must be provided at the shelter entrance.
- ❖ Shelters need clean dry bedding material if the temperature falls below 50°F and additional bedding is needed if temperatures fall below 35°F.
- ❖ Metal barrels, cars, refrigerators, freezers and similar objects **may not** be used for shelter.
- ❖ Shelters should be ventilated to provide for animal health and well being, and to minimize odors, drafts, ammonia levels and moisture. Ventilation can be provided by windows, doors, vents, fans or air conditioning.
- ❖ Shade large enough to contain all the captive wild animals at one time must be provided to protect them from the sun.
- ❖ *Outdoor shelter for captive wild birds:* May consist of natural vegetation that provides protection from the sun, wind, rain and snow.

## ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

**Sales and Purchases:** When you sell the carcass or parts of any captive wild animal you need to supply the purchaser with a receipt or written proof of origin. The purchaser must hold onto that receipt during the time the carcass or parts are possessed. The receipt must include:

1. The captive wild animal farm license or owners name;
2. The address and license number of the farm;
3. The number and species of animals, and
4. The date of the transaction.

**Escapes:** If any bear, cougar, bobcat, lynx, wolf, coyote or fox escapes from its enclosure or fenced area on a captive wild animal farm, you must notify the DNR within 24 hours after the escape.

❖ Call your local warden or the DNR Hotline at 1-800-847-9367 to report escapes.

## EXHIBITION OF CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS

You may exhibit captive wild animals you have licensed under your captive wild animal farm license provided you meet the following requirements:

1. Pens must meet the specifications outlined in the pen specification and transportation pamphlet.
2. Environmental enrichment as described earlier in this pamphlet must be implemented.
3. Animal Health and husbandry standards described in the pamphlet must be followed.
4. Animal and food waste must be removed from enclosures and under enclosures as necessary to prevent buildup.
5. Enclosures and food and water containers must be cleaned and sanitized at least once every 2 weeks and more often if necessary to prevent a buildup of dirt, debris, animal and food waste and other disease risks.
6. Gravel, sand, grass, etc. in pens runs and outdoor housing areas should be cleaned by removing the contaminated material as needed to prevent odors, diseases, insects and pest infestations.
7. You must display your CWAF license at the place of exhibit.
8. Each pen needs to be labeled with the proper common name, in English, of the animal confined in the pen.
9. Bear, cougar, badger, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox and fisher pens must be surrounded on all sides where the public can approach by a substantial guardrail. Guardrails need to be at least 3 feet high and well supported. Fencing must be at least 3 feet from the pens and the mesh must be less than 6 inches square.
10. Pens, guardrails and fencing must be kept in good repair at all times and all gates and doors must be kept securely locked.
11. Harmful wild animals (bear and cougar) can only be exhibited at the location authorized on the license. Special written approval is required to exhibit at any other location.
12. Bear, cougar, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox and fisher over 3 months old and any venomous snakes cannot be used in interactive sessions.
13. If using animals for interactive sessions you must be licensed to exhibit by USDA under 9 CFR 2.1 and follow the guidelines found in 9 CFR 2.131.

*Note: CFR is the Code of Federal Regulations.*

## RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

You must keep a record by date of all captive wild animals that are purchased, sold, acquired, or transferred. The record must include:

1. Complete name and address and the number of any captive wildlife license of the person from whom the wild animals were purchased or to whom the wild animals were sold.
2. The date of the transaction and the number and species of the wild animals.
3. All captive wild animals that have died, have been killed, or have escaped.

You have 7 days from the date of an activity to record a transaction in your records. All records and reports must be kept for 3 years.

These records must be kept at the facility and made available for inspection by DNR personnel upon request.

### Additional Reporting Requirement for Amphibians:

If you take mudpuppies, leopard frogs and tiger salamanders from the wild you must include the county the animals were taken from in your records. You must complete harvest records on the day of harvest.

*Note: These are the only amphibians that can be taken live from the wild in Wisconsin for commercial purposes.*

### Quarterly Reports

1. You must submit a quarterly report by April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31 each year for the previous 3 months. You only need to report transactions involving bear, cougar, bobcat, lynx, coyote, fox, wolf, badger, mink, otter, weasel and skunk on your quarterly report.
2. A quarterly report does not need to be filed if you do not have any activity or transactions involving these species during a quarter.

### Annual Reports

In addition to any required quarterly reports, all license holders must submit an annual report by January 30, each year.

Annual reports must include all of the following information for each species of captive wild animal licensed by the person holding the license:

1. The total number of each species of captive wild animals possessed on the date of the report.
2. The total number of each species of captive wild animals that were purchased, produced or otherwise acquired during the reporting year.
3. The total number of each species of captive wild animals that were sold, released into the wild, or transferred during the reporting year.
4. The total number of each species of captive wild animals that were killed, escaped or died during the reporting year.

The DNR will send quarterly and annual report forms with your license or renewal application. An initial daily activity record form will be provided when the license is issued. You may copy this form as needed. If you have your own record-keeping system, forms or computer program you may use that system provided the records contain all the information required above.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

For a captive wild animal farm license application contact your local DNR office, call the Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing at: (608) 266-0862, or *write to*:

**Department of Natural Resources  
Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing  
P.O. Box 7924  
Madison, WI 53707-7924**

Applications must be filled out completely. If you lease the property where you have your captive wild animal farm a written lease is required. Requirements for a written lease appear on the application.

### FEES

Class A captive wild animal farm initial fee is \$200.00; annual renewal \$100.00.  
Class B captive wild animal farm initial fee is \$50.00; annual renewal \$25.00.  
The initial license fee is waived for anyone who is under 14 years of age and is a member of a 4-H club or a sporting club.

### Effective Period

A captive wild animal farm license is valid from the date of issuance until the following December 31.

### Captive Wildlife Laws

You may purchase a copy of Statutes ch. 169 and Natural Resources Administrative Code NR 16 by contacting Document Sales 202 South Thornton Avenue, P.O. Box 7840, Madison, WI 53707-7840, 608-266-3358; or on the internet at the Revisor of Statutes Bureau, [www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html).

## CAPTIVE WILDLIFE PAMPHLETS

The following information pamphlets may be obtained by contacting the DNR Bureau of Customer Service and Licensing:

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|---|------------------|
| • <u>Captive Wild Animal Farm</u>                         | <b>PUB-CS-17</b> |
| • <u>Wild Fur Farm</u>                                    | PUB-CS-18        |
| • <u>Bird Hunting Preserve</u>                            | PUB-CS-19        |
| • <u>Pen Specification &amp; Transportation Standards</u> | PUB-CS-20        |
| • <u>Deer Farm Fencing</u>                                | PUB-CS-21        |
| • <u>Dog Training &amp; Trialing</u>                      | PUB-WM-444       |

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